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BAT MAN
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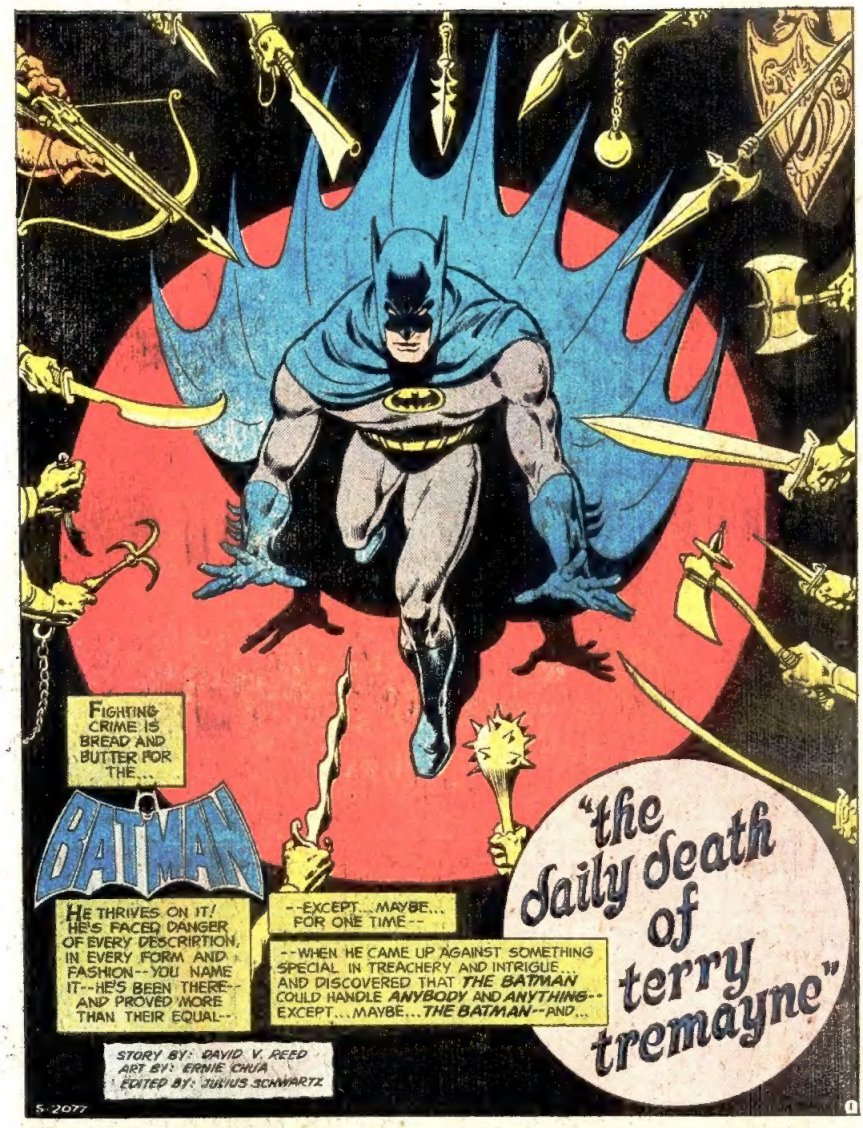
FIGHTING CRIME IS BREAD AND BUTTER FOR THE...
BATMAN
HE THRIVES ON IT! HE'S FACED DANGER OF EVERY DESCRIPTION, IN EVERY FORM AND FASHION--YOU NAME IT--HE'S BEEN THERE--AND PROVED MORE THAN THEIR EQUAL--
--EXCEPT...MAYBE... FOR ONE TIME--
--WHEN HE CAME UP AGAINST SOMETHING SPECIAL IN TREACHERY AND INTRIGUE... AND DISCOVERED THAT THE BATMAN COULD HANDLE ANYBODY AND ANYTHING--EXCEPT...MAYBE...THE BATMAN--AND...
"the daily death of terry tremayne"
STORY BY: DAVID V. REED
ART BY: ERNIE CHUA
EDITED BY: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
5-2077
1

BATMAN, Vol. 36, No.269, November, 1975. Published monthly by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. 10019. Carmine Infantino, Publisher. Julius Schwartz, Editor: E. Nelson Bridwell, Associate Editor. Bob Rozakis, Assistant Editor. Sol Harrison, Vice President—Director of Operations. Bernard Kashdan, Vice President—Business Manager. Jack Adler, Production Manager. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N. Y. and additional mailing offices. Advertising Representative, Sanford Schwartz & Co., Inc., 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017, (212) 391-1400. Copyright ©1975 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed In U.S.A.

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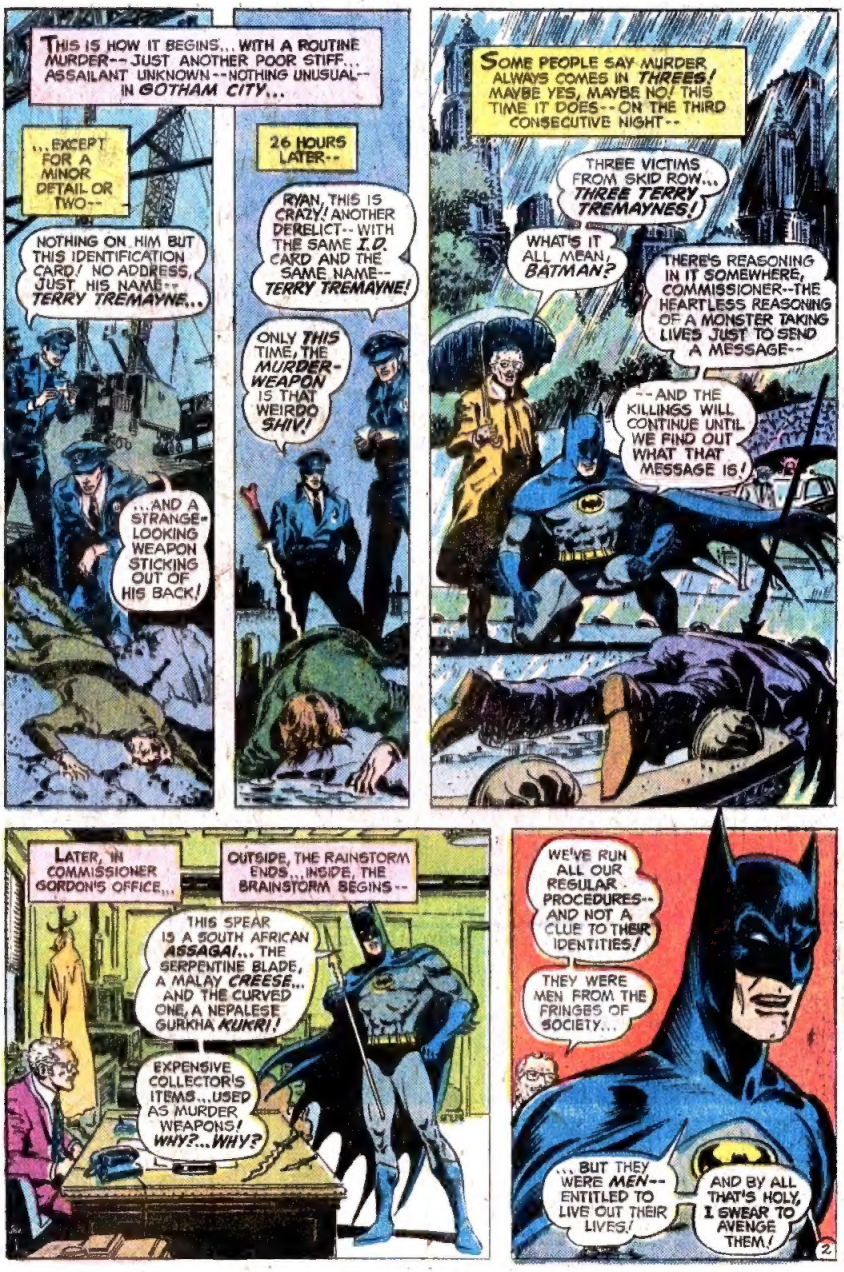
THIS IS HOW IT BEGINS... WITH A ROUTINE MURDER-- JUST ANOTHER POOR STIFF... ASSAILANT UNKNOWN--NOTHING UNUSUAL-- IN GOTHAM CITY...
...EXCEPT FOR A MINOR DETAIL OR TWO--
NOTHING ON HIM BUT THIS IDENTIFICATION CARD! NO ADDRESS, JUST HIS NAME-- TERRY TREMAYNE...
...AND A STRANGE-LOOKING WEAPON STICKING OUT OF HIS BACK!
26 HOURS LATER--
RYAN, THIS IS CRAZY! ANOTHER DERELICT-- WITH THE SAME I.D. CARD AND THE SAME NAME-- TERRY TREMAYNE!
ONLY THIS TIME, THE MURDER-WEAPON IS THAT WEIRDO SHIV!
SOME PEOPLE SAY MURDER ALWAYS COMES IN THREES! MAYBE YES, MAYBE NO! THIS TIME IT DOES--ON THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE NIGHT--
THREE VICTIMS FROM SKID ROW... THREE TERRY TREMAYNES!
WHAT'S IT ALL MEAN, BATMAN?
THERE'S REASONING IN IT SOMEWHERE, COMMISSIONER--THE HEARTLESS REASONING OF A MONSTER TAKING LIVES JUST TO SEND A MESSAGE--
--AND THE KILLINGS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL WE FIND OUT WHAT THAT MESSAGE IS!
LATER, IN COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE...
OUTSIDE, THE RAINSTORM ENDS...INSIDE, THE BRAINSTORM BEGINS--
THIS SPEAR IS A SOUTH AFRICAN ASSAGAI... THE SERPENTINE BLADE, A MALAY CREESE... AND THE CURVED ONE, A NEPALESE GURKHA KUKRI!
EXPENSIVE COLLECTOR'S ITEMS...USED AS MURDER WEAPONS! WHY?...WHY?
WE'VE RUN ALL OUR REGULAR PROCEDURES--AND NOT A CLUE TO THEIR IDENTITIES!
THEY WERE MEN FROM THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY...
...BUT THEY WERE MEN--ENTITLED TO LIVE OUT THEIR LIVES!
AND BY ALL THAT'S HOLY, I SWEAR TO AVENGE THEM!
2

MIDNIGHT IN SUBURBAN OAKVILLE IS SO QUIET YOU CAN HEAR A CAT CROSSING THE LAWN...
"REGULAR PROCEDURES" --MY FOOT!
HOW COME NOBODY THOUGHT OF LOOKING FOR TERRY TREMAYNE IN THE UNLISTED PHONE NUMBERS?
NOT EVEN A NIGHT LIGHT... NOBODY HOME?
NOPE, IT ISN'T MY IMAGINATION!
I'M NOT THE ONLY INTRUDER HERE!
WHAT THE--
--IS IT POSSIBLE?
ALL RIGHT-- GET OUT FROM UNDER THAT CURTAIN--
KLIK
3

--AND LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT YOU!
TALK FAST, SISTER--WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN TERRY TREMAYNE'S HOUSE?
JUST TRYING TO STAY ALIVE, BATMAN--I AM TERRY TREMAYNE!
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW SORRY I AM! I HAD NO IDEA--
DON'T APOLOGIZE... I'M NOT HURT... JUST A LITTLE IN SHOCK, PERHAPS, REALIZING IT'S YOU... THE BATMAN!
YOU KNOW WHY I'M HERE...?
YES--BECAUSE YOU'RE A GODSEND!
THESE GHASTLY TERRY TREMAYNE MURDERS--YOU MUST BE INVOLVED SOMEHOW...
UNFORTUNATELY, YES...
I WAS ENGAGED TO A MAN I BELIEVED TO BE AN IMPORT MERCHANT, BUT WHO WAS, IN REALITY, A PROFESSIONAL THIEF!
RECENTLY, HE AND THREE CONFEDERATES STOLE SOMETHING OF EXTRAORDINARY VALUE--"THE FLORENTINE BOX"!
"THIS BOX WAS LEFT WITH MY FIANCE, AND WAS SUPPOSEDLY IN HIS POSSESSION WHEN... TWO WEEKS AGO... HE DIED OF OF A HEART ATTACK..."
"AT THE FUNERAL, HIS THREE ASSOCIATES TOLD ME THE TRUTH ABOUT HIM!"
"THEY HAD RANSACKED HIS HOME WITHOUT FINDING THE BOX--BUT WERE CONVINCED I KNEW WHERE IT WAS!"
"HOW COULD I POSSIBLY KNOW? I HAD NOT EVEN KNOWN HE WAS A THIEF!"
"THEN, FOUR DAYS AGO, THEY GAVE ME AN ULTIMATUM: ONE WEEK TO SURRENDER THE BOX!..."
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.
4

WHAT TO SINK YOUR TEETH INTO WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY AND YOU'RE NOT A WEREWOLF.

Every now and then, do you get this uncontrollable urge to bite into something that's really got some meat in it?

Are you tired of sugar-sweet snacks that dissolve in your mouth, and crunchy snacks that you can hardly tell you ate, and all the other boring stuff you have to put up with, every day?

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You might want to carry a few extra ones, too. Then, if you meet a werewolf, you can give him something to sink his teeth into instead of you.

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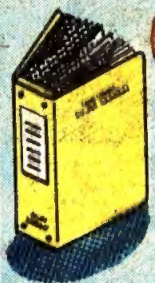

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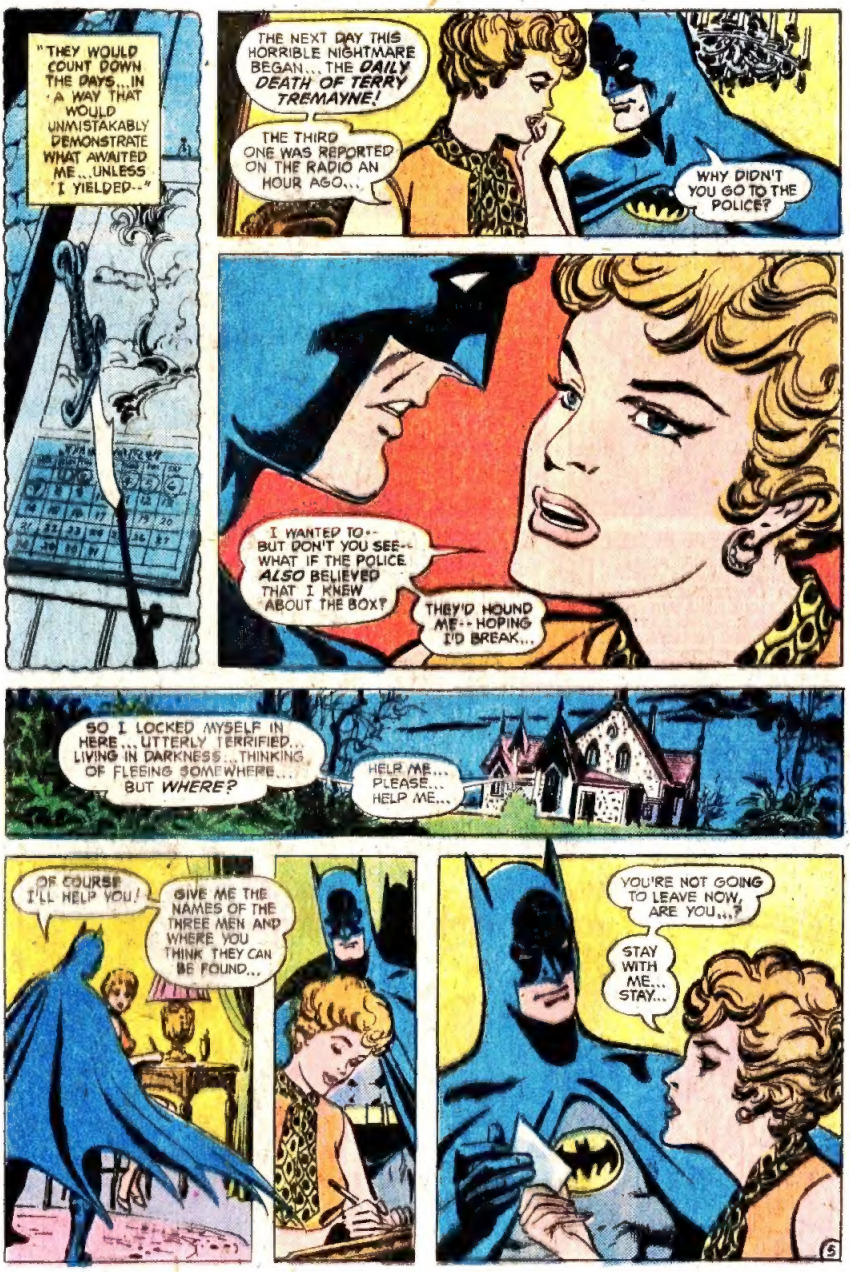
"THEY WOULD COUNT DOWN THE DAYS...IN A WAY THAT WOULD UNMISTAKABLY DEMONSTRATE WHAT AWAITED ME...UNLESS I YIELDED--"
THE NEXT DAY THIS HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE BEGAN... THE DAILY DEATH OF TERRY TREMAYNE!
THE THIRD ONE WAS REPORTED ON THE RADIO AN HOUR AGO...
WHY DIDN'T YOU GO TO THE POLICE?
I WANTED TO-- BUT DON'T YOU SEE-- WHAT IF THE POLICE ALSO BELIEVED THAT I KNEW ABOUT THE BOX?
THEY'D HOUND ME-- HOPING I'D BREAK...
SO I LOCKED MYSELF IN HERE... UTTERLY TERRIFIED... LIVING IN DARKNESS... THINKING OF FLEEING SOMEWHERE... BUT WHERE?
HELP ME... PLEASE... HELP ME...
OF COURSE I'LL HELP YOU!
GIVE ME THE NAMES OF THE THREE MEN AND WHERE YOU THINK THEY CAN BE FOUND...
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LEAVE NOW, ARE YOU...?
STAY WITH ME... STAY...
5

I CAN'T... TRY TO UNDERSTAND!
YOU'RE IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER UNTIL THE WEEK IS UP--BUT THERE WILL BE MORE OF THESE SAVAGE KILLINGS UNLESS I PUT A STOP TO THEM!
BUT YOU OUGHT TO GET OUT--GET SOME EXERCISE--
TELL YOU WHAT--I'LL SEND MY FRIEND BRUCE WAYNE AROUND TOMORROW! HOW DOES TENNIS SOUND?
WONDERFUL! THANK YOU...FOR EVERYTHING...
WHAT A FASCINATING, LOVELY WOMAN! SHE REALLY GETS TO ME--
--BUT... I'LL LEAVE THAT FOR BRUCE WAYNE TOMORROW! TONIGHT THERE'S WORK TO BE DONE...AND NOT MUCH TIME!
HALF AN HOUR LATER--TARGET NUMBER ONE--LA LANTERNE ROUGE--THE FLOURISHING ENTERPRISE OF MR. NOEL PARIS, NOTED HOST AND PUBLICAN...
NOT A BAD SET-UP... NIGHT CLUB AND RESTAURANT FOR A FRONT--
--AND A GAMBLING LAYOUT VERY QUIETLY UPSTAIRS IN THE REAR!
GENTLEMEN--SHOOTING THE SIX FOR FIVE BIG ONES--
YOU'RE FADED!
CRASH!
6

AHH, THE BATMAN! BUSINESS OR PLEASURE?
BOTH! MY BUSINESS IS MY PLEASURE!
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU GAMBLED..
ALL THE TIME, MR. PARIS! GIVE ME THE DICE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, BATMAN? ARE YOU EXAMINING THE DICE?
NO--NOT THE DICE--THE BOX!
LIKE YOU, I'VE DEVELOPED A GREAT INTEREST IN BOXES LATELY --ESPECIALLY FLORENTINE BOXES!
POINT-ZERO-FIVE SECONDS LATER--
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!
BACK OFF, BATMAN--OR I'LL KILL YOU IN SELF-DEFENSE BEFORE A DOZEN WITNESSES!
BANG BANG
BLAM
KRACK
THWOK
CAN'T LET 'EM GET OUT OF SIGHT!
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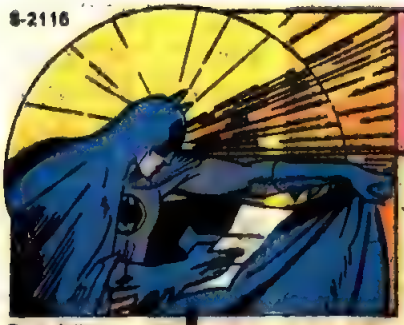

LETTERS to the BATMAN

c/o NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC.,
75 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

Dear Julie,

I was interested to read, "Batman's Greatest Failure" (**BATMAN #265**) for two reasons: it was the first time Mike Fleisher has written a **Batman** story and also the debut of Rich Buckler as **Bat**-penciller.

Well, they both came through! Although I felt Mike was a little unfair in the way he held out on us—i.e. **Batman** knew about the traps but we had no indication of it—he did show a flair for the sardonic humor cropping up between **Batman** and Commissioner Gordon lately and the story was involved enough to hold my interest throughout. (But **Batman** didn't really bug Gordon's phone, did he?)

Artistically, there were no gripes at all. Rich gave us a nice variety of layouts that were both interesting and helpful to moving the story quickly. Furthermore, Rich's draftsmanship, aided by Berni Wrightson's inks, avoided the rough, unsophisticated feel he sometimes shows.

Finally, congratulations are due to you, Julie, for maintaining the strong development of **Batman** into the dread figure he should be. No matter who the writer, under your direction **Batman** has a consistency of character that makes reading a pleasure.

Louis A. Letzer, St. Louis, Mo.

(Reactions to our fill-in Bat-team were mixed, as the comments on this page will show. As for the phone-bugging remark, it was merely Batman's idea of a joke. Just as no one questions how information is gotten by The Shadow, who inspired the Caped Crusader, we must also assume that "The Batman knows . . ."—BR)

• • • • •

Dear Mr. Schwartz:

After a depressingly long absence, the name Berni Wrightson finally appears in the credits of **BATMAN #265**. I thought this return came with little fanfare, but after looking at the story, I realized there was no reason for shouting.

Rich Buckler and Berni combine for an okay style, but I miss the greatness that Berni does on his own. His duty in life is to create, not fill in on another's work. Buckler is good, but not for **Batman**. The small, miniscule panels are not in the **Batman** style. The Darknight Detective needs room to have his cape spread out behind him.

Sherman Beyson, Amherst, Mass.

Rich Buckler and Berni Wrightson have drawn an incredible story! From the grim-visaged Commissioner Gordon confronting **The Batman** in the splash panel to the fiery holocaust which ends the career of the would-be murderer, the artwork on the tale was outstanding!

Action was portrayed with breath-taking realism! Flames licking and bat-cape unfurled each time the cowled hero started to move. Even the position and shape of the panels added to the effect, especially in **Batman**'s slug-fest with Brutus where the masked avenger seemed to be knocked from one panel to the turn about in the next. But what will really stick in my mind for some time is the ghastly, flame-scarred face of Bob Trenton first revealed on page 5. Ugh! Terrific!

Fred Schneider, New York, N.Y.

(For every reader reaction, there is an equal and opposite one! Witness the evidence above and the cases presented below!—BR)

• • • • •

Dear Julie,

"Batman's Greatest Failure" was!

The story lacked drama. Somehow we knew that Trenton was not competent enough to pull off three murders under **Batman's** nose. The Buckler/Wrightson art failed to generate emotional impact. There was no element of mystery, not enough darknight detective stuff. Trenton's trauma was too much like that of Harvey (Two-Face) Dent, but Dent added manic-depressive schizophrenia to his paranoia and made Trenton seem flat by comparison.

Ter Jonassen, Morton, Pa.

If there ever was a perfect comic book, **BATMAN #265** was it! First you give us two of the comic industry's finest artists, Rich Buckler, whose layouts are unsurpassed, and Berni Wrightson, who is second to none!

And the story itself? A masterpiece! I had previously thought that Denny O'Neil was the only writer for **Batman**, but after reading Mike Fleisher's effort, I may be forced to change my mind. **The Batman** was handled just as he should be, from the mysterious way he appeared and disappeared from the Commissioner's office to the manner in which he tracked down Robert Trenton without explaining his motives or worrying about seeming to be a failure. What more can I say? It was just perfect!

Cameron Hughes, East Windsor, N.J.

(And on that note, we reach the bottom of the page with just enough room to tell you Bat-fans about some upcoming magazines you won't want to miss! First, in JUSTICE LEAGUE #126, Two-Face teams up with the world's greatest super-heroes in an off-beat tale by Gerry Conway! Second, keep an eye out for the revival of ALL-STAR COMICS! It features the Justice Society of America and spotlights the Robin of Earth-Two! Both magazines will be on sale the first week in September!

SHAZAM!

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL FIGHTS THE...

MINERVA MENACE!

AUNT MINERVA, LEADING LADY OF THE UNDERWORLD, HATCHES A PLOT TO DOMINATE THE WORLD OF THE FUTURE!

IF THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD RESTS WITH THE CHILDREN, I'LL CONTROL THE CHILDREN!

GREAT IDEA, BUT HOW?

SHUT UP AND LISTEN!

I'LL USE MY MIND CONTROL MACHINE TO CONFUSE THEIR MINDS. WE'LL CAPTURE THE TV STATION AND BROADCAST "CONTROLLED THOUGHTS"! I'LL CONVINCE THEM THAT WHAT THEY LIKE THEY DON'T REALLY LIKE!

BRILLIANT THINKING, AUNT MINERVA!

AUNT MINERVA'S HENCHMEN CAPTURE BILLY BATSON.

MINERVA QUICKLY BEGINS OPERATION "BIG LIE."

YOU DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

YOU DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

I DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

I DON'T LIKE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

WE'VE GOT TO DECONTROL THE CHILDREN'S MINDS. AND LET THEM SAY WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN!

SHAZAM!

AT THE SOUND OF THE MAGIC WORD MYSTIC LIGHTNING STRIKES AGAIN!

THINK FOR YOURSELVES AGAIN, KIDS!

WHAT AM I SAYING? I LOVE HOSTESS TWINKIES!

GOLDEN SPONGE CAKE WITH CREAMY FILLING INSIDE!! WHAT COULD BE MORE DELICIOUS THAN TWINKIES?

Twinkies

THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL HAS BEATEN ME AGAIN!

YOU SHOULDA BRAINWASHED THE KIDS ABOUT SOMETHING OTHER THAN TWINKIES

STUDIO B

YEAH, AUNT MINERVA, KIDS LIKE TWINKIES TOO MUCH TO BE FOOLED!

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ACTION COMICS
THE SUPERMAN FAMILY
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
SUPERBOY starring THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES
AND LOOK FOR ME IN EVERY COMIC THAT HAS ONE OF THESE TITLES ON THE COVER!
BAT MAN
WORLD'S FINEST COMICS
JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA
the BRAVE and the BOLD
BATMAN FAMILY
Detective COMICS

GONE!--PARIS AND BOTH HIS GUNMEN!
WHERE COULD THEY VANISH THAT FAST?
ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER!--THIS SUBWAY EMERGENCY EXIT!
WISH YOU TWO HAD KEPT OUT OF THIS! BUT--
WHACK
--IF YOU INSIST!
SSSSZZT
8

LOOK OUT! TRAIN COMING--
--ON BOTH TRACKS!
CH-ZZZZZZZZZZ-KRAAAAAAAAAAM
BLAM

2 SOCKO SPECIALS

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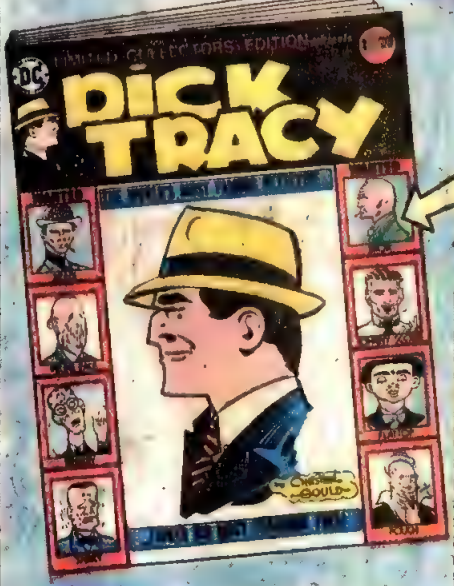

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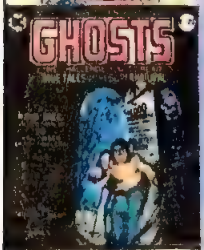
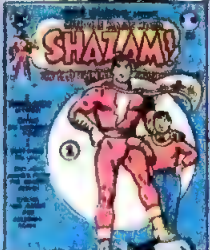
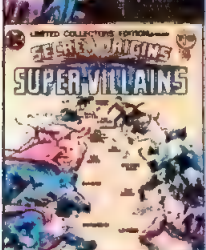
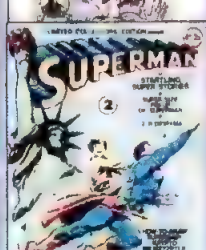
8:00 EASTERN 7:00 CENTRAL
PEBBLES AND BAMM BAMM
The BUGS BUNNY and Road Runner HOUR
8:30 EASTERN 7:30 CENTRAL
A WHOLE SEASON OF SUPER-CARTOONS WITH BUGS AND ELMER, TWEETY AND SYLVESTER, DAFFY DUCK, ROAD RUNNER, AND MORE!
SCOOBY-DOO WHERE ARE YOU?
9:30 EASTERN 8:30 CENTRAL
AGAIN! THE WORLD'S GREATEST GREAT DANE, STILL HILARIOUSLY INVOLVED IN SPOOKY ADVENTURES.
CBS SATURDAY
SPECIAL ADDED ATTRACTIONS.
IN THE NEWS
THIS IS HOW THE NEWS OUGHT TO BE. SHORT AND SIMPLE, AND IT MAKES SENSE... TEN TIMES THROUGH THE MORNING.
"IN THE NEWS" WITH CHRISTOPHER GLENN.
10:00 EASTERN 9:00 CENTRAL
LIVE
SHAZAM/ISIS HOUR
THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL IN MANY NEW ADVENTURES. EXCITING ACTION AND EXCITEMENT FOLLOW HIM WHEREVER HE GOES!
10:30 EASTERN 9:30 CENTRAL
NEW LIVE
NEW! A SUPER-HEROINE! IN LIFE, SHE IS PROFESSOR ANDREA THOMAS. IN HER SECRET IDENTITY, SHE IS ISIS, DEDICATED TO A FIGHT AGAINST EVIL IN ALL ITS FORMS!
11:00 EASTERN 10:00 CENTRAL
FAR OUT SPACE NUTS
NEW LIVE
WHEN TWO LOVABLE KOOKS ACCIDENTALLY "LUNCH" THEMSELVES INTO OUTER-SPACE, THEY'RE LAUNCHED INTO A NEVER-ENDING SERIES OF HILARIOUS ADVENTURES!
STARRING BOB DENVER AND CHUCK McCANN - IN PERSON.
NEW LIVE
GHOST BUSTERS
11:30 EASTERN 10:30 CENTRAL
HIDDEN MESSAGES THAT SELF-DESTRUCT! SECRET ASSIGNMENTS FROM THE MYSTERIOUS "ZERO"! LOTS OF FAMOUS GHOSTS! PLUS TWO LOONY GUYS AND ONE HYSTERICAL GORILLA--EQUALS ABOUT A MILLION LAUGHS A MINUTE.
STARRING LARRY STORCH AND FORREST TUCKER - IN PERSON.
12:00 EASTERN 11:00 CENTRAL
VALLEY OF THE DINOSAURS
WHIRLED BACK IN TIME ..TO A HIDDEN VALLEY. A MODERN FAMILY SHARES EXCITING ADVENTURES WITH THEIR NEW-FOUND STONE AGE FRIENDS...
12:30 EASTERN 11:30 CENTRAL
EVERYBODY KNOWS 'EM, EVERYBODY LOVES 'EM. AND HERE THEY ARE, WITH LOTS OF NEW ADVENTURES.
LIVE
FAT ALBERT AND THE COSBY KIDS
1:00 EASTERN 12:00 CENTRAL
CBS CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL
LIVE
FILMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY FOR KIDS, BUT IF YOUR PARENTS BEHAVE, YOU CAN LET THEM WATCH, TOO
THRILLS 'N CHILLS 'N GIGGLES 'N LAUGHS! ALL RIGHT HERE ON CBS
REMOVE THIS AND PUT IT ON YOUR WALL.









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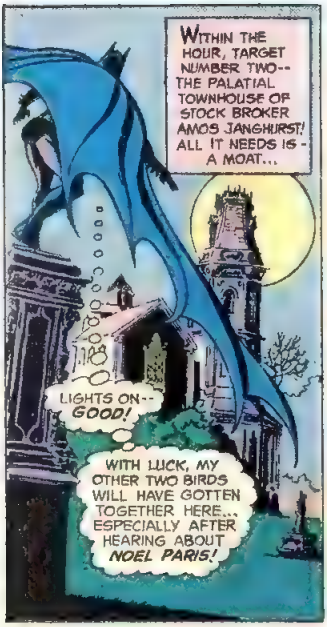
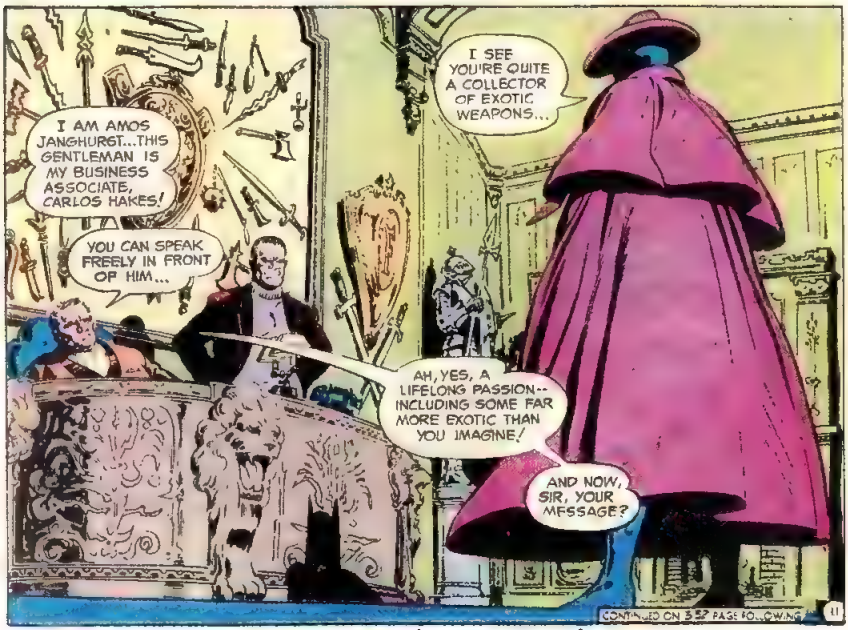

WITHIN THE HOUR, TARGET NUMBER TWO-- THE PALATIAL TOWNHOUSE OF STOCK BROKER AMOS JANGHURST! ALL IT NEEDS IS - A MOAT...
LIGHTS ON-- GOOD!
WITH LUCK, MY OTHER TWO BIRDS WILL HAVE GOTTEN TOGETHER HERE... ESPECIALLY AFTER HEARING ABOUT NOEL PARIS!

I HAVE A MOST URGENT MESSAGE FOR MR. JANGHURST-- FROM TERRY TREMAYNE!
COME IN, PLEASE. .

SHORTLY--
THIS WAY, SIR...


I AM AMOS JANGHURST...THIS GENTLEMAN IS MY BUSINESS ASSOCIATE, CARLOS HAKES!
YOU CAN SPEAK FREELY IN FRONT OF HIM...
I SEE YOU'RE QUITE A COLLECTOR OF EXOTIC WEAPONS...
AH, YES, A LIFELONG PASSION-- INCLUDING SOME FAR MORE EXOTIC THAN YOU IMAGINE!
AND NOW, SIR, YOUR MESSAGE?
CONTINUED ON 35 PAGES FOLLOWING

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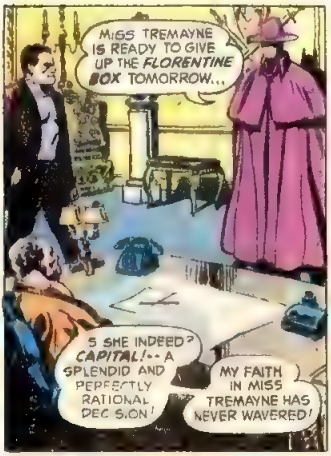
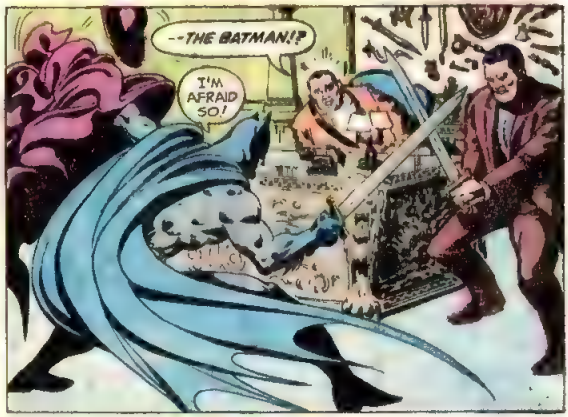
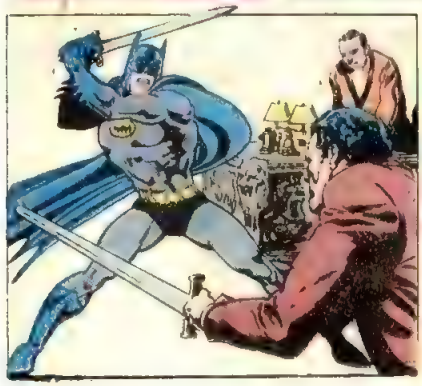

MISS TREMAYNE IS READY TO GIVE UP THE FLORENTINE BOX TOMORROW...
IS SHE INDEED? CAPITAL!-- A SPLENDID AND PERFECTLY RATIONAL DECISION!
MY FAITH IN MISS TREMAYNE HAS NEVER WAVERED!

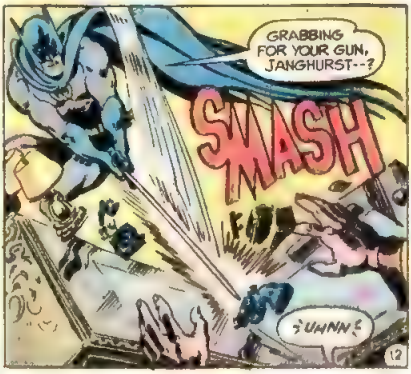
SO YOU CAN STOP THE KILLINGS-- YOU KNOW -- THE COUNTDOWN WITH THE CORPSES!
THE--AH-- COUNTDOWN WITH THE CORPSES? VERY AMUSING!
I MUST SAY, SIR, YOU HAVE A WAY WITH A PHRASE--DON'T YOU AGREE, CARLO?

WHAT'S HAKES DOING? WHY IS HE TAKING DOWN THAT BROADSWORD?
WELL, SIR, TO BE PERFECTLY FRANK, WE'VE SUDDENLY BECOME MOST CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR REAL PURPOSE IN COMING HERE...
...AS WELL AS YOUR IDENTITY...

IN THAT CASE, GENTLEMEN--


--THE BATMAN!?
I'M AFRAID SO!




GRABBING FOR YOUR GUN, JANGHURST--?
SMASH
UHNN!

KLAAANG
GHRK
CARLOS! HERE!-- QUICK!
NOW WHAT EARTHLY GOOD CAN THAT DO THEM?
CONSIDER YOUR DILEMMA, MY DEAR BATMAN-- SEALED OFF IN AN EXECUTION CHAMBER BATTENED WITH STEEL
-WHILE WE ARE SAFELY BEHIND THE THE FIREPLACE!
AND NOW... OBSERVE THE WALLS!
YOU ARE CONFRONTED BY A WEAPON OLDER THAN HISTORY ITSELF-- BLOWGUNS--WHOSE PROJECTILES ARE POISON-TIPPED STEEL NEEDLES FIXED ON YOU!
A UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT, IS IT NOT, BATMAN?-- UNITING ANCIENT WEAPONS WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY!
AND SO--SPEAKING OF COUNTING DOWN CORPSES--YOU HAVE PRECISELY THREE SECONDS TO LIVE!
13

1...
...2...
...3
TWANG
THICK
TRONK
TRENG
TCHK
THIK
THNG
WELL, MR. JANGHURST--SO MUCH FOR MODERN TECHNOLOGY!
SOON AFTERWARD--
BUT YOU RADIOED YOU HAD TWO MORE FOR US!
WHERE ARE THEY?
BEHIND THIS FIREPLACE, COMMISSIONER--RELUCTANT TO COME OUT, PERHAPS, BUT I'M SURE THEY CAN BE PERSUADED--AS SOON AS THIS FIRE GETS GOING!
IT DOESN'T TAKE THE BATMAN LONG TO BRIEF THE COMMISSIONER... IT NEVER DOES...
REMARKABLE, BATMAN! YOU CERTAINLY BLEW THIS CASE WIDE OPEN IN A HURRY!
NOT QUITE, SIR! SO FAR, WE ONLY HAVE THE MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KILLINGS--
14

--WE STILL HAVE TO PROVE THEIR GUILT... AND WE STILL HAVE TO FIGURE OUT THAT FLORENTINE BOX!
WHERE IS IT NOW? WHAT MAKES IT SO VALUABLE? WHY HASN'T SUCH A THEFT BEEN REPORTED?
SO I HAVE PLENTY TO THINK ABOUT--
--INCLUDING BRUCE WAYNE'S TENNIS DATE THIS AFTERNOON... WITH THE LOVELY MISS TERRY TREMAYNE!
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WHO'S THE GORGEOUS CREATURE WITH BRUCE WAYNE?
NO IDEA! HE HASN'T INTRODUCED HER TO ANYONE... THEY'VE BEEN PLAYING TWO HOURS, TOTALLY ABSORBED IN EACH OTHER!
THANK YOU, BRUCE! I'VE BEEN ABLE TO FORGET MY FEARS... AT LEAST FOR A LITTLE WHILE...
BUT, TERRY, I TOLD YOU--EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T FURNISH THE DETAILS--THE BATMAN SENT WORD NOT TO WORRY!
I'LL BELIEVE THAT WHEN I HEAR IT FROM THE BATMAN!
I'LL FRESHEN UP A BIT AND MEET YOU BACK HERE IN TEN MINUTES!
HMM... BRUCE WAYNE ISN'T DOING BADLY AT ALL WITH THE RAVISHING MISS T...
...BUT I WONDER HOW SHE'LL FEEL TOWARD BATMAN WHEN HE SHOWS UP TONIGHT WITH THE GOOD NEWS?
SUDDENLY
HELP!
THAT'S TERRY'S VOICE!

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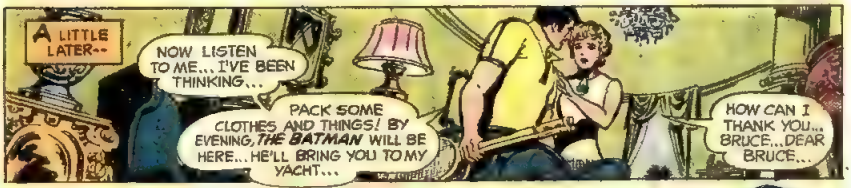
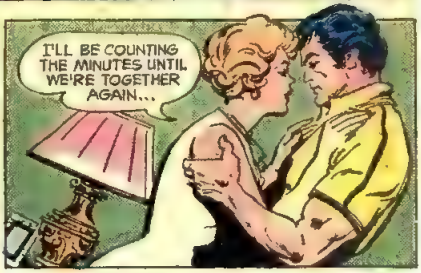
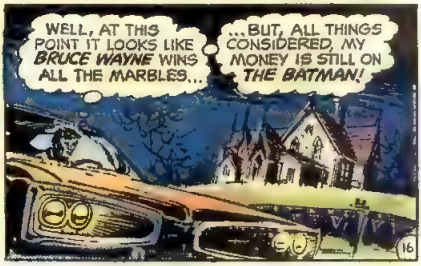
OH, BRUCE... I FOUND HIM LYING THERE... STILL ALIVE...
HE WAS TRYING TO SAY SOMETHING TO ME ...AS HE DIED...

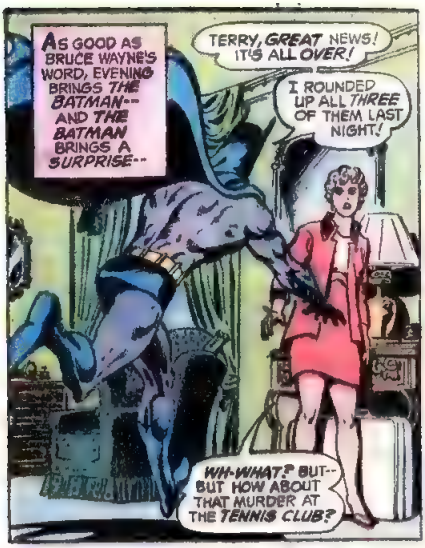
HIS NAME WAS GEORGE NIBLEY-- HE WORKED HERE AS A HANDYMAN..
YEAH... BUT THIS I.D. CARD ON HIM SAYS TERRY TREMAYNE!
JUST LIKE THE OTHERS-- FANCY WEAPON AND ALL!

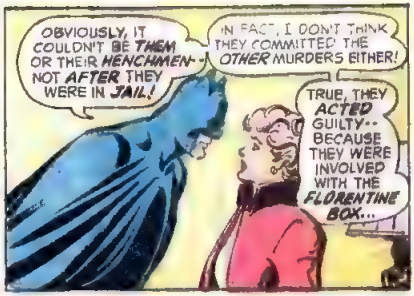
DON'T YOU SEE, BRUCE? THEY FOLLOWED US HERE! IT'S ANOTHER WARNING!
WHAT WILL I DO?
FIRST WE'LL GET YOU SAFELY BACK HOME! THEN WE'LL SEE...

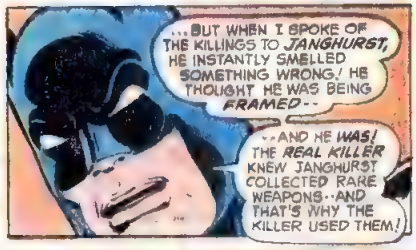

A LITTLE LATER--
NOW LISTEN TO ME... I'VE BEEN THINKING...
PACK SOME CLOTHES AND THINGS! BY EVENING, THE BATMAN WILL BE HERE... HE'LL BRING YOU TO MY YACHT...
HOW CAN I THANK YOU... BRUCE... DEAR BRUCE...

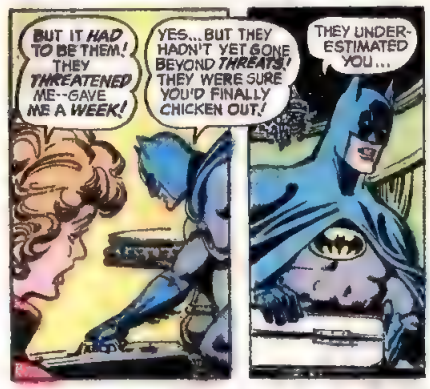

I'LL BE COUNTING THE MINUTES UNTIL WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN...


WELL, AT THIS POINT IT LOOKS LIKE BRUCE WAYNE WINS ALL THE MARBLES...
...BUT, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, MY MONEY IS STILL ON THE BATMAN!


AS GOOD AS BRUCE WAYNE'S WORD, EVENING BRINGS THE BATMAN--AND THE BATMAN BRINGS A SURPRISE--
TERRY, GREAT NEWS! IT'S ALL OVER!
I ROUNDED UP ALL THREE OF THEM LAST NIGHT!
WH-WHAT? BUT--BUT HOW ABOUT THAT MURDER AT THE TENNIS CLUB?

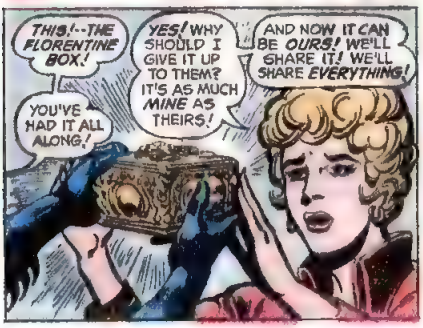

OBVIOUSLY, IT COULDN'T BE THEM OR THEIR HENCHMEN--NOT AFTER THEY WERE IN JAIL!
IN FACT, I DON'T THINK THEY COMMITTED THE OTHER MURDERS EITHER!
TRUE, THEY ACTED GUILTY--BECAUSE THEY WERE INVOLVED WITH THE FLORENTINE BOX...

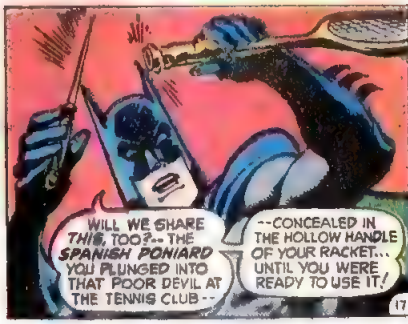

...BUT WHEN I SPOKE OF THE KILLINGS TO JANGHURST, HE INSTANTLY SMELLED SOMETHING WRONG! HE THOUGHT HE WAS BEING FRAMED--
--AND HE WAS! THE REAL KILLER KNEW JANGHURST COLLECTED RARE WEAPONS--AND THAT'S WHY THE KILLER USED THEM!


BUT IT HAD TO BE THEM! THEY THREATENED ME--GAVE ME A WEEK!
YES...BUT THEY HADN'T YET GONE BEYOND THREATS! THEY WERE SURE YOU'D FINALLY CHICKEN OUT!
THEY UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHY ARE YOU OPENING MY BAG?

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING--SOMETHING YOU'D BE ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN TO TAKE WITH YOU IF YOU WERE LEAVING HERE!


THIS!--THE FLORENTINE BOX!
YOU'VE HAD IT ALL ALONG!
YES! WHY SHOULD I GIVE IT UP TO THEM? IT'S AS MUCH MINE AS THEIRS!
AND NOW IT CAN BE OURS! WE'LL SHARE IT! WE'LL SHARE EVERYTHING!


WILL WE SHARE THIS, TOO?--THE SPANISH PONIARD YOU PLUNGED INTO THAT POOR DEVIL AT THE TENNIS CLUB--
--CONCEALED IN THE HOLLOW HANDLE OF YOUR RACKET... UNTIL YOU WERE READY TO USE IT!

BUT NO ONE KNOWS, EXCEPT YOU AND ME... AND NOTHING MATTERS NOW BUT THE TWO OF US...
JUST YOU AND ME... MEANT FOR EACH OTHER...
NO, SWEETHEART... YOU'VE GOT ME ALL WRONG!
THAT'S NOT HOW I OPERATE!
KLEK
LATER, AT POLICE H.Q., THE TERRY TREMAYNE DOSSIER IS ALMOST COMPLETE...
ALL THE KILLINGS WERE TERRY'S WORK! THE WEAPONS AND I.D. CARDS WERE CLEVERLY CALCULATED TO BRING ME TO HER...
...AFTER WHICH SHE COULD USE ME TO GET RID OF HER ENEMIES...BY PINNING MURDER RAPS ON THEM!
BUT WHY DID SHE KILL A FOURTH TIME--AFTER YOU HAD ALREADY NAILED THE THREE SHE WAS FRAMING?
SHE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT THEN... AND BRUCE WAYNE --WHO ALWAYS MINDS HIS OWN BUSINESS-- DIDN'T TELL HER!
SO SHE CONTINUED THE KILLING, TO MAINTAIN HER STORY!
THE FLORENTINE BOX--ONE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI'S PRICELESS CREATIONS, STOLEN FROM A MUSEUM IN FLORENCE A CENTURY AGO...
...PASSING THROUGH MANY HANDS...SOMETIMES BOUGHT, SOMETIMES STOLEN...ALL ITS OWNERS KEEPING THE SECRET...
...AND NOW IT GOES BACK TO ITALY!
WELL, IT'S OVER! ASIDE FROM THE BOX, WE'VE GOT PARIS, HIS TWO GUNMEN, JANGHURST, HAKES-- AND TERRY TREMAYNE!
THAT'S NOT A BAD SCORE-- SIX!
YES...I SUPPOSE SO...BUT SOMEHOW, I WISH IT HAD BEEN FIVE!
END
Dedicated to the memory of the BRILLIANT DASHIELL HAMMETT, who showed all mystery writers the way to go!
NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE THIRD WEEK IN SEPTEMBER
18

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